

SEPTEMBER 2014 NEWSPAPER



LEARNING ABOUT TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE FROM PHILLY STANDS UP! BY SHAYA FRENCH

Shaya French was an intern with Black & Pink for summer 2014 from Bard College.

Jason talked about transformative justice in the January 2014 “Message From Jason.” Transformative justice is a set of practices for holding people accountable who cause harm. Abolishing prisons won't stop people from hurting other people. How do we respond when acts of violence occur?

Transformative justice is practiced by several activist collectives in California, New York and Pennsylvania, and probably other places. Most of these collectives focus on addressing sexual abuse.

In June, I talked with Jenna Peters-Golden, who is a member of Philly Stands Up! (PSU) and learned about how PSU holds people accountable.

The accountability process begins when someone in the community approaches PSU. Sometimes people come to PSU and say things like “I really messed up and the person I hurt told me I need to work with you guys.” Other times people who have been sexually assaulted ask PSU to track down the person who hurt them to begin an accountability process. If PSU has the capacity to take on a situation, two collective members will start meeting with the person. They design a process that is shaped by demands from the survivor like “pay for my STI testing/abortion/doctor's appointment”, “deal with your drug/alcohol problem” or “write me a sincere letter of apology.”

Each accountability process is unique based on the specifics of the situation, but each process generally includes:

1. Identifying the actions and behaviors that precipitated the process.
2. Accepting the reality of harm caused.
3. Recognizing behavioral patterns.
4. Creating strategies for unlearning these patterns and learning new ones.

PSU develops a plan with the person they are working with and adapts the sessions to the person's needs. The group is also very intentional in practicing preferred social behaviors. Preferred social behaviors include maintaining clear expectations about physical and social boundaries, practicing empathy, and showing respect. For example, if someone is late or misses a meeting they will talk about how that is inconsiderate and discuss how that can be communicated better. PSU also helps people develop more structure in their life and will assist people with finding housing, jobs, a therapist, etc.

Most PSU sessions consist primarily of talking. PSU frequently asks people to tell stories about the instances of assault, and together they look for relationship patterns and themes that led to the behaviors the person is trying to stop doing. PSU also gives people homework which might be keeping a log of when they feel frustrated or angry, maintaining a journal about the accountability process or reading materials about patriarchy, substance abuse, privilege and oppression.

In accountability sessions, participants practice new behaviors through role plays. For example PSU members will pretend to be a new sexual partner and the participant will practice disclosing that they have sexually abused people in the past and are working on an accountability process. Most sessions last 9 months, because PSU has found that is generally enough time to get people on the right track. Knowing when to end a session is tricky and frequently based off of if the initial demands have been met, if the person has concrete resources like anger management, books, free therapy, and feels comfortable talking with friends, and if their relationship with substances is changing in a helpful way.

Accountability sessions are just one part of PSU's work. PSU also holds educational workshops on consent and abuse prevention and works to build the movement for transformative justice and prison abolition.

Here are several questions to reflect on. If these questions inspire you, consider writing down your answers to them. If you reach any insights, please send them in and we'll print a selection of answers in an upcoming newsletter. Address the letters to “Black & Pink—Transformative Justice.”

- What does healing and apology mean to you? When has someone who hurt you done or said something that caused you to forgive them? What did they do? Why did it work?
- When have you done or said something for someone that you've hurt? What was it? Did it repair your relationship?
- Do you think the accountability process described above would help you reconcile harm you've caused? Can you imagine this type of process helping people you know who've caused harm to not cause harm again?

MAIL PROCESSING UPDATE

Our Black and Pink Family is growing steadily, which is exciting! Each week the Boston (national) chapter receives about 100 pieces of mail. In 2013, we switched from processing mail once a month to every week. Each week, 4-12 volunteers meet for several hours and process about 50 pieces of mail. Unfortunately this is still not enough and we are several months behind on mail processing. Apologies!

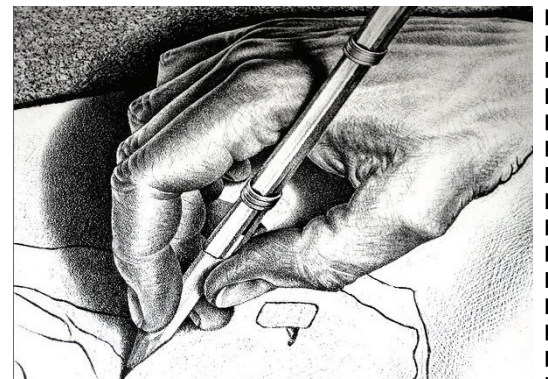
- At this time we are unable to write back to say we got your letter, but if it's been 3 months we most likely did and have signed you up for what you wanted.
- If you asked us for more information about B&P we added you to the newspaper list because we've found that the newspaper answers most basic questions about B&P.
- We are trying to get better at sending back pictures but tend to focus on reading new mail over sending back people's pictures. If you include your name and number and a self addressed envelope we will send your picture back sooner.
- We are also behind on getting ‘first letters’ on to pen pal listings and are working on getting a better scanner to help with this.

SEND US YOUR HEADER ART!

This month's header is by James! Have your art featured in the Newspaper! We'll feature a different artist each month! Send us a drawing that says, “Black & Pink” or “Black and Pink” or “Poetry from the Heart” for the headers! Header art should be around the size of the newspaper header! Smaller or larger images may be resized to fit. You can send us other art too and we will include it on the poetry page.

This month's header is by **J. Damian in Texas!**

What will you design?!
Mail to: Black & Pink -
Newspaper Submissions



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Dorchester, MA 02125

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Statement of Purpose
Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. Our work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing.

Black & Pink is proudly a family of people of all races.

About this Newspaper
Since 2007, Black & Pink free world volunteers have pulled together a monthly newspaper primarily composed of material written by our family’s incarcerated members. In response to letters we receive, more prisoners receive the newspaper each issue!

This month, the newspaper is being sent to: **5,630** prisoners!

Disclaimer:
Please note that the ideas and opinions expressed in the Black & Pink Newspaper are solely those of the authors and artists and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black & Pink. Black & Pink makes no representations as to the accuracy of any statements made in the Newspaper, including but not limited to legal and medical information. Authors and artists bear sole responsibility for their work. Everything published in the Newspaper is also on the internet—it can be seen by anyone with a computer. By sending a letter to “Newspaper Submissions,” you are agreeing to have your piece in the Newspaper and on the internet. For this reason, we only publish First Names and State Location to respect people’s privacy. Pieces may be edited to fit our anti-oppression values and based on our Editing Guidelines.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS TO HOT PINK!
Seeking erotic short stories, poems, AND ART by Black & Pink incarcerated and free-world family members for a new ‘zine. To be mailed, art cannot include full nudity. Please send submissions (and shout outs to the authors from the first issue mailed in January!) addressed to Black & Pink - HOT PINK. This is a voluntary project, and no money will be offered for submissions, but you might get the chance to share your spicy story with many others! The zine will be sent 1-2 times per year. To subscribe to receive a copy of HOT PINK twice a year, write to our address, Black & Pink - GENERAL.

A MESSAGE FROM JASON AND BLACK AND PINK’S NATIONAL LGBTQ PRISONER SURVEY

Dear friends,
Firstly we must apologize for having a delay in newspapers. I know delays on the outside cause a lot of frustration for y’all. I know that you depend on us, please know that we are behind in newspaper production because we have lots on our plate and not out of any lack of care or attention to your needs. Thank you to those who have written to find out if all is okay, indeed all is fine; **we were not able to create an August 2014 newspaper.** One of the reasons we are behind will become quite clear as you turn the pages.

After over a year of work, we are finally sending out Black and Pink’s National LGBTQ Prisoner Survey.



The purpose of this survey is to find out more about the lives and experiences of incarcerated LGBTQ people. We are hoping to gather information that we can share with politicians, community organizations, and, most importantly, with all of our Black and Pink membership. Many of these questions were created by Black and Pink members who are in prison. The rest of the questions were created by “free world” volunteers. Everyone who fills out a complete survey and sends it back to us will receive a certificate of thanks as well as a Resource Guide with addresses of organizations (which will be shared over time in the Newspaper as well; it is convenient for us to mail it with the certificate). Each person who fills out a survey will also have the possibility of receiving \$25 for commissary (there will be 25 randomly selected winners; sadly we do not have enough funds to give everyone \$25). Our goal is to get AT LEAST 1,000 complete surveys, so please do fill it out. You might even see one of the question asked that you wrote in to us now being asked to our entire membership.

This survey is quite long. It will take about 90 minutes to finish the whole thing. Please fill out all of the questions that apply to you. The more complete surveys we get the more honest our final report will be. It is okay if you do not finish it all in one sitting. Many of the questions can bring up difficult emotions. We ask questions about sexual violence. We ask questions about discrimination. We ask questions about solitary confinement. It is very important that you are gentle with yourself as you take the survey. Take time to breathe. Take breaks as you need (there are reminders throughout the survey to take breaks).

The surveys will be anonymous. When you mail the survey back to us we will add your name to a database of people who completed the survey so we can send you a certificate and enter you into the raffle. We will keep your completed survey separate from your name, so no one will know what you said on the survey. However, your survey answers will only be anonymous to us and in our report; unfortunately we cannot control how prison guards behave. You know the prison guards where you are locked up best. You know whether or not they will look at your outgoing mail. Please make your decisions about the survey based on your best judgment.

THANK YOU for taking this survey. We believe the results of this survey will be VERY helpful in our shared work.

When sending the survey back you will notice you can fold it up and use the Business Reply mail. You are welcome to use that, but we are asking that anyone who can afford to mail it back with a stamp of their own, please do. The more we save on postage, by sharing the costs, the more funds we will have for our work. Thank you for your powerful voices and your willingness to be part of this growing family. We keep our movement growing knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

In loving solidarity,
Jason

BLACK AND PINK BOSTON IN SOLIDARITY WITH MICHAEL BROWN AND THE PEOPLE OF FERGUSON

It is with love and anger that we write this statement of solidarity with the family of Michael Brown and those resisting police violence in Ferguson, Missouri. We send our deepest condolences to the family of Michael Brown as they grieve. It is an outrage that police officers are able to continuously kill Black people with impunity. Yet the reality of police violence against Black people, and other communities of color in the United States, is part of the roots of this settler colonial nation. The murder of Michael Brown by a white police officer is both an individual tragedy because of the devastating loss of this Black teenager and it is another example of the harm caused by the white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist carceral system operating in the US. We express our full support to those resisting police violence in Ferguson by any means they choose.

Protests and resistance in Ferguson has also brought national attention to the overwhelming militarization of police. Images are circulating of police in fatigues, military style vehicles, and teargas being shot into peoples’ yards. This increased militarization of the police is becoming the norm across the country. While police forces increase their firepower, Black people with guns, such as Marissa Alexander, are seen as an ultimate threat to white power structures. While we fight towards the abolition of the police we must join in campaigns to disarm the police and take away these tools of repression.

As national attention turns to Ferguson, as the FBI is sent in to conduct their own investigation, as President Obama issues statements from his vacation on Martha’s Vineyard, we remember that the murder of Michael Brown is not an isolated incident. We remember that “innocence” is not how we judge the value of Black life. We remember that the state and criminal punishment system will never bring justice. We remember that we are part of a movement against racist violence that has a history in slave rebellions, civil disobedience, urban insurrections, and countless other tactics. We recognize the importance of following Black leadership in this struggle, including powerful Black LGBTQ people, particularly Black transgender women. We continue the fight remembering all those whose lives have been stolen by police violence.

We remember:
Michael Brown

Rekia Boyd

Sean Bell

Duanna Johnson

Bobby Hutton

Zayd Malik Shakur

and so many, many others.



At a rally in Ferguson, Mo. on Aug. 19, young protestors speak out against police brutality *afro.com*

Dear family,

This is the first time I’ve written even though I’ve been receiving Black & Pink for almost two years, I’m guessing.

The Texas penitentiary is probably the most corrupt prison system in the United States as far as mass warehousing of human beings for profit. There is more and more human beings coming in the system with life, natural life, and sentences so high as to leave us without hope of ever touching down in the free world, sentencing that can hardly be justified compared to the crime. We have too many so-called “tough on crime” politicians that have expensive lifestyles to maintain at our expense.

There is absolutely no unity here in the Texas Prison System. We have absolutely nothing in common except the hate we harbor for each other. We are so busy hating each other that we forget who our true enemy is, and that is the system! The Criminal Justice Psychology is just a fancy word for divide and conquer. It truly breaks my heart to see how easily we fall in line with their Program.

I dream of the day we come together and demand a change, the day we stand together and see that the next man’s suffering is also my suffering and vice versa. Until then we will be the puppets of our master, The Texas Prison system.

With much love and respect to all,
Shine, Texas

Whether you are sitting up or laying down in your cell-block, dorm, or at your home, remember you’re a beautiful person inside & out. Never second guess your beauty because it comes from within. The world sees the outside and judges the LGBT family members from outward, but they have not traveled the roads or highways in life we’ve been on. As a bi-sexual male, I know there’s a love there for us all, and in time we will obtain our chance to explore the greatest in life, just hold on and don’t lay down, stand for somethang or fall for anythang.

I’m now incarcerated at the moment in Florida. But I’ll be released at the end of this year, and for all those who are blessed to be coming home, fighting to get out, and in forever, I know a place in my heart goes out to you. I’ve met some beautiful LGBT people in my lifetime, and at a young age, I know I’m bound to meet more... :D Smile. I’m very concerned about the needs of the LGBT-community, and whatever I can do to shed light on the darkness, it’s a blessing to do so.

Just know whatever path you choose to take, make sure there’s love to guide you down the path.
Call life.. Stay Beautiful, Beautiful.
Willie, Florida

My name is Steven but everyone calls me T.Y. I am writing this letter as feedback to a fellow struggler in solitary confinement in the January 2014 newsletter, Billy. I want you and the rest of our family to know that you’re not alone in your struggle. I’m in Illinois Dept. of Corrections Solitary Confinement. I’ve been here for 2 ½ years and that’s short to a lot of these guys. I have to go back to G.P. (population) in 3 months. I’m terrified. I don’t even know how to socialize anymore. I feel your pain. I came across a book that can help us. It’s free to all inmates. Write to: Survivors Manual: Surviving in Solitary, American Friends Service Committee, 89 Market St. 6th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102.

This prison not only has solitary confinement for segregated inmates but administrative detention and mentally ill inmates. I guess the best advice I can give my family is education and take action. Shout! Be heard! We know it’s wrong but let’s find out exactly how it works and what we can do to change it.

Also, keep up the fight Julia James!
Steven, Illinois

Dear Black & Pink,

First, let me say hello to all my Black & Pink family, I hope you are doing well (under the circumstances) and not allowing the Prison Industrial Complex to break you down. I would like to tell you today what I think (as a trans woman) being in this situation, and not being able to get all the thing I need, nor even being able to legally live in my own gender preference.

I identify as an African American trans woman, but right now, because I was not on hormones prior to incarceration, I've been told that I must go through a 12 month evaluation before I can be approved for feminizing hormone treatments. Personally, I think that it all sucks. I am a woman, no matter how I look I know that I am a woman, and I should be treated as such. I would in a split second jump at the opportunity to have surgery if the state would offer the chance. I have expressed that on more than one occasion.

I am also offended by the fact that I cannot live in my gender identification i.e. being issued as standard clothing bras and women's underwear, as it stands I can only get a bra if it is medically approved, and I am not allowed to have women's underwear at all. I also cannot wear any type of makeup, legally that is. And I feel that it's very disrespectful of the recognition of my gender preference.

We (gay and trans prisoners) are not second, but third class citizens. Is it acceptable for us to be harmed by staff and inmates, laughed at and treated disrespectfully, and is seems as if we have no real recourse. In many cases even our GLBTQ brethren and sistren on the outside don't even recognize us. So I'm asking all of you in and out of the system to stand up for who you are

and fight for the right to get the things we need to be who we are. Fight for sex reassignment surgery, fight for the right to live like a woman and have feminine things, and most of all fight for the proper protections needed against the abuse that we are suffering at the hands of the homophobic prison gestapo and their inmate cohorts.

We need more support from the outside. For those of you who do really love and care about us and work tirelessly to help us, know that you are forever loved and respected, thank you very much for all you have done and will do. In the meantime my friends, stay safe and beautiful.

Dear Black & Pink Family,

Peace and blessings family. I hope that this find everyone in and outside these walls doing well. This is my first time writing and I just wanted to give a shout out to everyone and to say no matter how many strides are made on the streets, in prison we will always be hated and discriminated against.

People fear the unknown. They think that just because someone is LGBT that it makes them the same just by talking to someone. I agree wholeheartedly with what Dakota wrote in the Dec ‘13 Newspaper: Many prisoners throughout the system seek the acceptance of everyone else. Everyone inside these walls needs to tighten up, if someone can’t accept you for you then you don’t need to be around them. And that goes double for my fellow pagans (Wiccans), we’re hated on anyway. Well, peace and blessings and stay strong.

Your Brother,
Joe, North Carolina

Dear Black and Pink,

Hello and God Bless you all my brothers and sisters. I have really enjoyed your Newspaper. My name is Scott, 33 years old, bisexual, white guy that made a big mistake by catching my case and getting ten years. I been down 6 years, got 4 more to go and I got the worst kinda case, that’s what most people think and judge me for. So I am doing what Jason said in his message in the January ‘14 Newspaper- telling the truth, being honest with my LGBTQ family, to heal and hopefully change things. I am convicted of rape and I am sorry everyday to my victim, my victim’s family, my family, and loved ones and to my God and last myself. Hopefully you all don’t judge me for it but will help me out.

Thanks and God Bless,
Scottie, Ohio

I’m a lifer in California, who has had to endure sexual and physical assaults at the hands of CDCR and inmates. I realize that the color of skin, location of living, and even gang membership separate LGBTQ family. But no human being will ever serve “life” and not seek out another human being to share emotion and friendship. I recently lost contact with a lover, a soul-mate, due to CDCR transfer. It really messed up my heart and head. Yet I will always be there for my brothers and sisters. Promote release dates, we’re stronger by the LGBTQ voices we have in freedom. Be at peace within our circles. And be a friend to one another.

Merry meet,
Naughty Girl, California

Hello to all of my brothers and sisters out there,

I wanted to write all of you in prison around the country that have or know someone who has Hepatitis C, and especially people being denied treatment for mental health reasons (usually the reason given is that standard interferon treatment for Hep C can make mental health conditions worse). There’s a new treatment that is not interferon based, it is called “Sovaldi” or “sofosbuvir.” It is FDA approved, it’s a pill with a 80 to 95% cure rate, with almost zero side effects (sometimes headaches and tiredness), but nowhere near as severe as interferon treatments. It has been recommended by the American Association for the Study of Liver Disease and the Infectious Diseases Society of America to be part of “All first line treatments” for Hep C (HCV) genotypes 1 to 6, with no known mental health side effects. This eliminates the Prison’s usual arguments that they are denying you treatment out of “concern for your mental health.” The cure time is also cut in half with the new medications to only 12 to 24 weeks depending on genotype. For people with the internet, you can find more information at www.sovaldi.com/faq

It is also very expensive, \$84,000 to \$168,000 for a course of treatment right now, but prisons cannot refuse treatment for serious medical needs based on cost, see Rosado v. Alameida 349 F. supp. 2D 1340-1348 (S.D. Cal 2004), and Kosilek v. Maloney 221 F. Supp. 2D 156-161 (D. Mass 2002). There is plenty of case law to support this, and Hepatitis C is a known serious medical condition, and “Liver deterioration” is recognized by the courts as a “physical injury” that is more than “De minimis,” which means if you are refused treatment for this dangerous disease you can sue your prison for punitive, compensatory, and nominal damages.

This new pill is literally a miracle cure for Hep C and prisons now have no excuse to deny it! This disease can kill you or cause serious maladies and most people infected don’t even know they have it so get checked. Even if you don’t have it, please spread the word about this new cure to your friends and family, as it will save countless lives! I am fighting a lawsuit on these exact issues in District Court here in Oregon right now and so will hopefully have some good news in the next year or so.

Stay strong,
Rob, Oregon

Dear Black & Pink family,

First off I send my love to all y’all! I love how open everyone is in their letters. And how strong y’all are for being out in the open about your sexuality. I can’t say the same about myself, cause I’m not out in the open about my sexuality. I’m an undercover bisexual because being out in the open would put me in serious harms way. Since I am a member of an organization and have been since I was on the streets. So these 13 year I’ve been down have been frustrating both emotionally and sexually.

I am writing in because I want to respond to a letter I saw in my June newspaper. I had never heard the term Groomer before. So once I read that letter from James, it really touched home. I’m proud of him for putting it out there like that. There are people out there who will befriend you with ulterior motives. I want to tell my story because of this. I was 17 years old and on my way to prison waived into adult court. I was placed in a cell with a man who was twice my size and age. Who was also very muscular and very well endowed. He befriended me, and since he had been to prison for a long bit previous to this. He showed me how to work out and we had numerous conversations late into the night about what prison was like. He was very open about his-self and his body. I got comfortable with him being naked in the cell with me at times. He would come back from the shower and dry off in our cell applying lotion. Or bird bathing in our cell late at night after our workouts. I would watch him and stare at his dick. I had never been with another man but I was becoming very curious wondering what it would be like with him. Long story short, one night our conversations led to him asking me if I wanted him to show me some tricks to making it in prison. Not knowing exactly what he meant, I said yes. He quickly got up and pulled out his dick expecting me to give him oral sex. I refused and he wrestled me to the ground explaining to me how easy it would be to have his way with me and what would I do when there’s 2, 3, or 4 guys trying the same thing. He then pulled my pants down with his dick in hand strokin the head in between my cheeks. I gave in and begged him to stop I would give him oral sex. That’s when he turned the tables on me. He got up saying he’d never hurt me. He was just trying to show me how vulnerable I was. And he didn’t want me to do anything I didn’t want to do. By then I was all in and ready to go. He made me tell him I wanted to do this. I had to pull him out and do it myself. I tried my best to give him oral sex but because of his size I had to finish him with my hands. I have to say that I was torn between 2 emotions after it was all said and done. #1. I hated that I had done it. #2. I loved it cause I had never been more turned on in my life.

Anyways... if you’ve been in the same situation don’t feel like you’re alone or that it’s hopeless. We can all grow from situations no matter how negative they are. We can take the negative and become stronger as people.

I love who I am and hope that my story will help make others aware. I’ve taken a bad situation in my life and turned it into something positive. Had this never happened I might’ve never explored my sexuality. Then I might never realized I love being with men as much as I love women.

So to be honest with yall I don’t hate him for that. I wish that the circumstances were different and I wasn’t taken advantage of. But I’m glad I found out how much I love being with other men. Now I’m ready to dig deeper into my sexuality and try more new things.

So with that I’ll close with all my love going out to y’all, and especially to the free world members of our family who work so hard to making and sending out this publication! Trust me when I say your time & effort don’t go unnoticed. It’s nice to know there are people who care enough to put the paper into print for us. Til the next one...

...everybody keep your heads up...

...and stay strong...

... Much love
Always
John

Dear Black & Pink,

Have just transferred from a Friendly Queer institution, to a land of the unknown. At C.M.F. in California there was a large Gay Family population which felt comfortable for a in the closet queer like myself.

With the support at C.M.F. Gay Family population, I had began to come out of the closet. Since coming from a Right Wing life style, and being a Paraplegic Bilateral Amputee because of my crime, it was difficult for me to shed all this baggage, and become my true self. But with Family Support, began doing so. Shared with institutional Social Workers my gayness, and secret life style. Then felt comfortable enough to tell my Sister. Who to my Surprise, welcomed me still with love and affection, not putting me down. And was supportive of my decision to Come out of the closet.

Then fell in Love with a handsome Black man, who loved me back. Letting my Sister know of this also. And her being supportive of it also. Then to my Surprise told me my niece and nephew were also Supportive of me.

So slowly but surely, began sharing my gayness with others, and not feeling ashamed of it. Then like a rug being pulled out from underneath me, am put up for transfer, then transferred. Leaving my Love and Supportive inside Family behind me.

The confidence I had built, is now at a Stand Still. Will always be Gay, no matter what, but some places make it rougher to share our feelings with other people. Like when the so call fellows, say look at that queer punk over

there. This burns me up. One, because I am the same as the queer punk they are talking about, two if you feel that way, you’re truly not my friend.

So am asking Our Family at Black & Pink LGBTQ, to all pray for me, in hopes I can continuing growing, and being Comfortable in sharing whom I am, a Gay White Male.

Love Your
Brother,
Larry

Dear Family & Friends,

Over the years, a substantial majority of people have expressed to me that they find comments in the Black and Pink newspaper “depressing” or “dramatic” because we don’t report any or much good news. One reason for that, of course, is because there has been precious little “good news” emanating from the American criminal justice system over the past several decades. But amid the overall picture of gloom & doom, there are the occasional bright spots of people such as myself who not only survive imprisonment in the American gulag, but who are very successful in spite of our incarceration.

As someone who has continuously championed for the rights of prisoners and abolish the Prison Industrial Complex, I observed long ago that despite a little rhetoric to the contrary, most politicians and many citizens in this country really do not like the idea of prisoners becoming successful. They do not want ex-prisoners to commit more crimes... but the mainstream idea of success is for former prisoners to work menial jobs for low wages. It really upsets people when former prisoners do well in society socially and economically, and most notably, no one in a position of power is stepping forward to claim any credit for the occasional outstanding success story than they are for the pyrrhic failure of the American criminal justice system as a whole.

Having millions of former prisoners means that while many have become “success” stories after release, a certain number have become very successful. One example is the current actor Danny Trejo, another example to come is my upcoming success in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland. Follow my case and future articles to get a more in depth understanding of my plight and purpose herein this labyrinth.

During the ten years of my incarceration, I’m aware that low self-esteem is pervasive throughout this country. For a long time, prisoners have been convinced that they are losers; pathetic; failures; and so they play up to such roles! Fortunately not everyone buys into it. My family at Black and Pink found me and my story to be inspiring with the adversity I have overcome and struggle forth to conquer, as well as the advice I have for anyone I can reach.

Please understand that as a monthly newspaper, that we at Black and Pink are constrained by how timely our coverage of prisoner issues can be. We are counting on all of our supporters to continue to collectively support us, and carry on shining a light upon our resistance in here. This is the time for change in these prisons, and they movement to do is growing across the country. Without the people’s support we cannot be successful. All support- no matter the size and content- comes together as a powerful force. Black and Pink have already brought more mainstream exposure about prison conditions and we shall continue, because real changes are mandatory.

I close with a patented reminder that “collective unity” and “understanding” must continue, so that we may proceed forth with the unshakeable foundation of Solidarity.

In Revolution and Solidarity,
Khalid, aka “Bayh!”, Maryland

Beloved Black and Pink,

First of all my name is “Afrika”. I was born and grew up in Natal South Africa, my home land. I am a Zulu transgender African woman here in prison in Illinois. It is very good to know that I am an “activist” in my Chicago land. I left the land of my birth when I was only 16 years old. Now, I turned 48 years old in April of this year.

Let me tell you, I really do miss my friend Nelson Mandela. He will always be to me my great leader forever. Like my king Shaka Zulu, I have them both inside of me, in my heart always.

I’d like to say to my girl friend Tori of South Carolina, keep your head up and don’t look down. I am your sister from the mother land, South Africa, but I love all my sisters and brothers around the world. So Tori, I do love you, as my lil sister and I care about what you are going through right now. Look girl, it has been hard on me too! Fighting for my right to live - fighting to get my needed hormone treatments.

Well, my family Black and Pink, I love you all. Peace, freedom, and justice for us all! Take great care with love in my heart...

Afrika, Illinois

The Black and Pink National LGBTQ Prisoner Survey begins on the next page!

The member survey begins by asking a bit about you. *Thank you so much for taking this important survey!*

1. Your age: _____ years old

2. Your race/ethnicity:

▽ 2a. Black/African American/Afro-Carribean

▽ 2b. Latin@/Hispanic

▽ 2c. White (non-hispanic)

▽ 2d. East Asian

▽ 2e. Southeast Asian

▽ 2f. South Asian

▽ 2g. Middle Eastern/Arab

▽ 2h. American Indian/Indigenous/First Nations/Native American

▽ 2i. Mixed Race

▽ 2j. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

▽ 2k. Inuit/Native Alaskan

▽ 2l. Other: _____

3. What languages do you speak? _____

4. Your gender/sex (below are some examples)

▽ 4a. Trans woman (assigned Male when born, now a Woman)

▽ 4b. Trans man (assigned Female when born, now a Man)

▽ 4c. Woman, or Cisgender Woman (assigned Female when born, now a Woman)

▽ 4d. Man, or Cisgender Man (assigned Male when born, now a Man)

▽ 4e. Genderqueer / Gender fluid

▽ 4f. Two Spirit (this identity only applies to people who identify as Indigenous / Native American / American Indian)

▽ 4g. Intersex

▽ 4h. Any other description of your gender? _____

5. Your sexuality

▽ 5a. Lesbian

▽ 5b. Gay

▽ 5c. Homosexual

▽ 5d. Bisexual

▽ 5e. Queer

▽ 5f. Same-Gender Loving

▽ 5g. Two Spirit (this identity only applies to people who identify as Indigenous / Native American / American Indian)

▽ 5h. Asexual

▽ 5i. Any other description of your sexuality? _____

6. Do you have a disability? _____ Yes, _____ No

6a. What kind of disability (please list all)? _____

7. Do you have children? _____ Yes, _____ No

7a. If yes, do you ever get visits or phone calls from them? _____ Yes, _____ No

8. Did you complete this kind of school? Mark X for "Inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, or "Outside" in the free world?

▽ 8a. Elementary School: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8b. Middle School: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8c. High School: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8d. GED: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8e. Some college credit, no degree: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8f. Trade/technical/vocational training: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8g. 2 year college (Associate degree): _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8h. 4 year college (Bachelor's degree): _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

▽ 8i. Graduate degree: _____ "inside" an institution like prison or juvenile detention, _____ "outside" in the free world

9. Have you ever served in any branch of the armed forces of the United States? _____ Yes, _____ No

9a. If yes, which branch? _____

10. What was your housing situation before you were incarcerated most recently? _____

11. Were you employed before you were incarcerated most recently? _____ Yes, _____ No

12. Have you ever traded sex for money, housing, food, drugs, protection or services when not incarcerated? _____ Yes, _____ No

13. Have you ever sold drugs for money? _____ Yes, _____ No

14. Have you ever stolen money or anything else you needed? _____ Yes, _____ No

15. How much money did you make in a year before you were incarcerated most recently? \$ _____

16. Growing up, about how much money did the people who raised you make each year? \$ _____

17. How old were you when you were first arrested? _____ years old

18. How old were you when you were first incarcerated? _____ years old

19. How many times have you been incarcerated? _____ times

Instructions

Please mark **one or more** ▽ which make sense for you.

Please put an **X** for “ X Yes, No” type questions

Please put **one or more X** for questions like:
“ X Emotional, Physical, X Sexual”

Please fill in the blank for other types like:
“ 35 years old” or “\$ 10,000 ”

Please write in answers to more detailed questions. You can use more paper if you are putting the survey in an envelope, please just write the question number ☺

Pre-Trial and Court Questions (based on your current sentence)

20. Were you held in jail prior to your conviction because you could not afford bail? _____ Yes, _____ No

20a. If yes, how long were you held in jail prior to your sentencing? _____ years _____ months _____ days

21. Were you denied bail prior to your conviction? _____ Yes, _____ No

21a. If yes, how long were you held in jail prior to your sentencing? _____ years _____ months _____ days

22. Did you have a private attorney? _____ Yes, _____ No

23. Did you have an attorney appointed for you? _____ Yes, _____ No

24. Did your attorney know about your gender/sexual identity? _____ Yes, _____ No

25. Did you feel discriminated against by your attorney? _____ Yes, _____ No

26. Did you feel discriminated against by the prosecution? _____ Yes, _____ No

27. Did you feel discriminated against by the judge? _____ Yes, _____ No

28. Did you take a plea agreement? _____ Yes, _____ No

28a. If yes, what were some of the reasons that you took the plea agreement? _____

29. Did you have a jury trial? _____ Yes, _____ No

29a. If yes, did you feel discriminated against by the jury? _____ Yes, _____ No

30. What were you convicted of (remember this is anonymous, and we will not judge you based on your conviction)? _____



Cute break!

They say “Hi!”

Incarceration Questions (based on your current sentence)

31. How long is your current sentence?

▽ 31a. Release after (Example: 10 years 6 months): _____years _____months

▽ 31b. Life sentence

▽ 31c. Life without parole

▽ 31d. Death Sentence

32. How long have you done on this sentence? (Example: 3 years 4 months) _____years _____months

33. What type of facility are you currently housed in? _____Federal ,_____State, _____County, _____Hospital

34. What level facility are you currently housed in? _____Pre-Release, _____Minimum, _____Medium, _____Maximum, _____Super Max

35. Which state are you incarcerated in now? _____

36. Have you ever been in solitary confinement? _____Yes, _____No

Please only answer questions 37-41 if you have ever been in solitary confinement. Otherwise, skip to question 42. Thank you!

37. Are you currently in solitary confinement? _____Yes, _____No

38. How many times have you been in solitary confinement? _____times

39. Added together, what is the total amount of time you have spent in solitary confinement? _____years _____months _____days

40. Have you ever been placed in solitary confinement for your own safety, or as a protective measure by the prison, *against your will*? _____Yes, _____No

41. Have you ever been placed in solitary confinement for your own safety *by your own request*? _____Yes, _____No

41a. If yes, what were some of the reasons? _____

Parole Questions

42. Do you have the option for parole with your current sentence? _____Yes, _____No

42a. Given the opportunity, would you go on parole? _____Yes, _____No

42b. If yes, when do you go up for your next parole hearing? _____

43. Have you ever been granted parole during a previous sentence? _____Yes, _____No

44. Have you ever been denied parole? _____Yes, _____No

45. How do you feel the parole board treated you? _____

45a. Do you believe you were discriminated against by the parole board? _____Yes, _____No

46. Have you ever been returned to prison for a parole violation? _____Yes, _____No

This is a great time to take a break, stretch your fingers, and rest. The next bunch of questions start asking about your identity and experiences with harm.

Sexuality

47. Did you identify as LGBTQ before your incarceration? _____Yes, _____No

48. Have you felt emotional pain from hiding your sexuality? _____Yes, _____No

49. Do any other prisoners know what your sexuality is? _____Yes, _____No

49a. If yes, how did they respond? (It is okay if different people had different reactions) _____

50. Do prison staff know about your sexuality? _____Yes, _____No

50a. If yes, how did they respond? (It is okay if different people had different reactions) _____

51. If you have been sexually active in prison, have you had conversations while in prison with your sexual partners about:
_____Safer sex, _____Sexually transmitted infections, _____HIV/AIDs, _____None of these topics, _____I have not been sexually active in prison

52. Have you ever been disciplined for consensual sexual activity? _____Yes, _____No

52a. If yes, which then occurred?: _____Disciplinary ticket (shot), _____Loss of privileges (like phone calls), _____Placed in solitary confinement, Other: _____

53. Have you ever used condoms or other barriers to help stop the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Infections while in prison? _____Yes, _____No

54. Does your prison offer access to condoms or other safer sex items? _____Yes, _____No

55. Have you ever traded sex with other prisoners for money/canteen/commissary during your incarceration? _____Yes, _____No

56. Have you ever traded sex with other prisoners for personal protection? _____Yes, _____No

Questions 57-69 are about Gender Identity.
Please answer only if you identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, genderqueer, two spirit, or another gender that is not cisman or ciswoman

Gender Identity

57. Have you felt emotional pain from hiding your gender identity? _____Yes, _____No

58. Do any other prisoners know what your gender identity is? _____Yes, _____No

58a. If yes, how did they respond? (It is okay if different people had different reactions) _____

59. Do prison staff know about your sexuality? _____Yes, _____No

59a. If yes, how did they respond? (It is okay if different people had different reactions) _____

60. Do you have a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria? _____Yes, _____No

61. Have you ever been denied a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder or Gender Dysphoria? _____Yes, _____No

62. Before you were incarcerated, did you take hormone replacement therapy to support your gender expression?
_____Yes prescribed by a doctor, _____Yes from the street, _____No

63. Do you take prescribed hormone replacement therapy to support your gender expression now? _____Yes, _____No

64. Have you ever been denied hormone replacement therapy you requested? _____Yes, _____No

65. Have you been given access to gender confirming (AKA sex reassignment) surgeries? _____Yes, _____No

66. Have you been denied access to gender confirming (AKA sex reassignment) surgery you requested? _____Yes, _____No

67. Do you know your prison's policy about medical services for transgender prisoners? _____Yes, _____No

67a. If yes, what is your understanding of the policy? _____

68. Are you permitted access to underwear and cosmetic needs that match your gender? _____Yes, _____No

69. Is there a special canteen available for transgender prisoners? _____Yes, _____No

69a. If yes, does one have to have a medical diagnosis to access products in this canteen? _____Yes, _____No



Sometimes even reading questions about violence can bring up things inside your mind. These thoughts can make you sad, angry, feel like you are back in the situation when harm happened. Remember to take breaks if you need them. Remember that you are not alone. One of the reasons we ask these questions is to show that violence against LGBTQ prisoners is far too common. Know that you are cared for and not forgotten.

Discrimination, harrassment, physical and sexual violence by prison staff

70. Have you experienced discrimination by prison staff? _____Yes, _____No

71. Have you experienced name calling or verbal harassment by a prison staff person? _____Yes, _____No

72. Have you ever been physically assaulted (hit, punched, kicked, beaten, etc) by a prison staff person? _____Yes, _____No

73. Approximately how many times have you been strip searched during your incarceration? _____times

74. Have you ever been subjected to a cavity search (inserting fingers inside anus and/or vagina)? _____Yes, _____No

75. Have you ever had unwanted touching by a prison staff person? _____Yes, _____No

76. Have you ever been sexually assaulted or raped by a prison staff person? _____Yes, _____No

77. Would you be willing to share any details of your experience(s) of unwanted touching or sexual assault by a prison staff person? ____Yes, ____No
If yes, please describe (feel free to use another page if you are sending this in an envelope): _____

78. Have you ever been promised anything in exchange for sexual favors from prison staff? ____Yes, ____No
79. Have prison staff ever intentionally placed you where you would be at high risk of being sexually assaulted by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No

Discrimination, harrassment, physical and sexual violence by another prisoner

80. Have you experienced discrimination by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
81. Have you experienced name calling or verbal harassmt by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
82. Have you ever been physically assaulted (hit, punched, kicked, beaten, etc) by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
83. Have you ever had unwanted touching by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
84. Have you ever been sexually assaulted or raped by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
85. Would you be willing to share any details of your experience(s) of unwanted touching or sexual assault by another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
If yes, please describe (feel free to use another page if you are sending this in an envelope): _____

Relationships

86. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship while in prison? ____Yes, ____No
87. Have you ever been in love with another prisoner? ____Yes, ____No
88. How did you make the relationship work? What were some of the successes? What were some of the challenges? _____

89. Are you now or have you ever been in an abusive relationship while in prison? ____Yes, ____No
89a. If yes, what kinds of abuse were present in your relationship? Abuse occurs when there is control by one person over another person:
____Emotional, ____Physical, ____Sexual, ____Financial, ____Cultural

90. If you have gotten out of an abusive relationship while in prison, in the past, how did you do so? _____

91. Do you know of resources available for prisoners who are in abusive relationships during their incarceration? ____Yes, ____No
91a. If yes, what are they? _____

This is a great time to take another break. Stretch your body, stretch your fingers. Take a rest.

Drug Use

92. Have you ever struggled with drug/alcohol addiction? ____Yes, ____No
93. Which drugs or alcohol have you used? _____
94. Have you used while incarcerated? ____Yes, ____No
95. Are there drug treatment programs available to you? ____Yes, ____No

Prison Programs

96. Have you ever taken part in a program offered by the prison? ____Yes, ____No
96a. If yes, which programs have you taken art in? ____Parenting, ____Recovery, ____Violence Prevention, ____Music, ____Art, ____Job Training, ____GED/High School Diploma, ____College Classes, ____Other programs
97. Have you ever been denied access to a program because of being LGBTQ? ____Yes, ____No
98. Does the institution you're in provide access to any books? ____Yes, ____No
98a. If yes, can you access these kinds of books? ____Legal books, ____Computer databases about legal information, ____LGBTQ books
99. What types of books do you read (either from the institution or mailed to you)? _____

Healthcare

100. How many times per year do you see a doctor?
101. Do you have to pay a fee to see a doctor? ____Yes, ____No
101a. If yes, how much are the fees you have to pay to see a doctor? \$_____
101b. If yes, has the fee ever prevented you from accessing medical care? ____Yes, ____No
102. Does the medical staff know that you are LGBTQ? ____Yes, ____No
103. Have you ever been denied medical care you requested? ____Yes, ____No
104. How does the medical staff treat you?
____Respectfully, ____Somewhat respectfully, ____Neutral, ____Somewhat disrespectfully, ____Disrespectfully

HIV/AIDS

105. Have you ever been tested for HIV/AIDS? ____Yes, ____No
106. Have you ever received education about HIV/AIDS in prison? ____Yes, ____No
107. Have you been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS? ____Yes, ____No
108. Were you diagnosed before your incarceration? ____Yes, ____No
109. If you are living with HIV/AIDS, are you provided with medication and doctor's visits for HIV/AIDS? ____Yes, ____No
110. Have you ever been put in solitary confinement because of your HIV/AIDS status? ____Yes, ____No
111. If you are living with HIV/AIDS, can you share some about your experience with harassmt, stigma, support, or other interactions with prisoners and prison staff? Please share as much or as little as you would like _____

Hepatitis C

112. Have you been diagnosed with Hepatitis C? ____Yes, ____No
113. Were you diagnosed before your incarceration? ____Yes, ____No
114. Are you provided appropriate care for Hepatitis C (medication) ? ____Yes, ____No

Mental Illness

115. Have you been diagnosed with any mental illness? ____Yes, ____No
115a. If yes, do you receive any therapy? ____Individual therapy, ____Group therapy, ____No, I do not receive therapy
116. How do your therapist(s) treat you?
____Respectfully, ____Somewhat respectfully, ____Neutral, ____Somewhat disrespectfully, ____Disrespectfully

Note: this space is left blank so that your name, on the reverse side, can be removed from the survey and your answers will remain anonymous

Dear Black & Pink,

I pray that everyone’s higher power is giving every one of you the blessing you need. I am a long time reader and this is the first time for me to write. My name is Charles but everyone knows me as “Chucky.” In the “Big lock ‘em up state,” Texas. I have been Gay from the time I was 10 years old. I always had to hide it. It was not ‘till I was in here that I came out, to the one that has always been there for me, Mom. It was a shock at first, but time worked it out.

My story started before the prison is what it is now. I was G.P. when I first came down. I was young looking and white at the biggest unit in Texas. There was no Safe Prisons program or PREA at that time. It was f***, fight, or bust a \$50. Well I did not like anyone around me, and I did not have a lot of money. So I had to try to fight. That did not last long. After being jumped on by three inmates, I know I was not going to last.

So being young and not knowing the games that is played, I got with this one man. I thought hewould be good to me, now knowing he was part of a family. I found out fast. I was passed around like a blow up doll. After a short time of this, and all his family having me, I was sold for \$25. When I was told that, I got mad and started to fight again. Well no one wanted me. That was good for me then.

Until one night. At rack time, my celly didn’t come in, it was another inmate. After a short time, I knew that there was something wrong. Then the boss c/o came by and asked this guy “if this is what he wanted.” The guy said “yes.” “Just be out at chow” the c/o said and walked off. That is when my nightmare started.

He was a foot taller and 100 lbs heavier, on the weight lifting team. He started to touch me, I started to talk him down, but it turned bad. There was nothing I could do, just pray it would be over soon. But he did it three times. He said “if I said anything I would not make it out alive.” I had to go to school later, so in class I told a friend, and he said “to go tell it.” Fear was so much that I think that is what made me to tell it. I told a Lt, he was not trying to hear it. He said, “Go back and take care of your business or find you a man to do it.” So I sat down right there. He started to yell and tried to kick me, calling me all sorts of names, from faggot to d__ksucker. That is when the Capt came out, he laughed and said, “Well, looks like you got you a kid Lt. So take care of your boy.” The Capt made it out as a joke, but I was thankful to have some help.

I saw the Doc at the infirmary, who agreed I was raped. I then went to OIG, the Capt’s office, back to infirmary, back to OIG, all the time writing statements. After 8 hrs, I was taken to a free world hospital for a rape test. And then after all that I was taken back to the unit and told to go back in my old cell. I had to make a stand so I did, and didn’t care what would happen. But I was moved to lock up. I was treated like I had done something wrong.

After a long time in lockup I was sent back out to GP. I had to fight the one that raped me every time I seen him. Every time I lost the fight, but he know I would not give up. The hate I had was so bad that it came to the point I tried to burn him with gasoline. I was stopped by a c/o before I could get the matches lit. Back to lockup. The rape test came back, there was not enough evidence to file on.

Not knowing what to do about my pain, I started trying to help other inmates that could end up in the same place I was at. I never want anyone to go through what I went through. After being on safekeeping for 7 years I was called out. A D.A. from a big city in Texas wanted me to be a character witness in a cold case of a rape and murder. It was the man that raped me that was going to be on trial. This was going to be a capitol murder trial. I knew that he could die, and I could have a hand in it. After some time, he signed out for Capitol life without parole. I was so mad at that time.

But my friends I can say now, the pain is slowly being released by sharing my story. I know the pain will one day be gone, even though the thing that happened will never leave. I know that this story has changed the prison over the years. For I was part of drawing up the Safe Prisons/PREA program in Texas. I know that the system is not using it for what it was originally drawn up for. I just pray that no one will fall in the cracks.

So my friends and family, just know that sometimes you have to stand and do not worry about what will happen. For it is you that you have to look out for first, once you can do that then you can help others. I pray that my story will give someone hope to stand strong. So keep your head up and be proud of yourself.

Much Love,
Charles aka Chucky, Texas

First off, I want to send all my girls out there a huge hello from Oregon. The reason I am writing today to everyone is because I am starting on a quest for better, more responsible treatment for us girls throughout the prison system. It is my quest to get what we would be able to get along our journey to our transition (mtofem) that we would be able to get if were out there on the streets or even under the umbrella of Obama Care or any other government health care program.

I have, since coming from California in another prison, been under the “supposed” care of a “Doctor” here at this prison who has been very problematic in taking care of my hormone replacement needs... They will not Rx my shot and that was at 40 mg every 2 weeks and the only thing they give me now is a script of Estradiol pills @ 2.5 mg daily. They have stopped my other therapy too and even though I have said that the pills are upsetting

my stomach and requested another brand, the patch or whatever, these people say “if you having stomach issues then I can decrease the milligrams further...”

My claim so far is that they are clearly “indifferent to medical needs,” Denying my right to equal protection under law, Being cruel and unusual by making me continue with symptoms caused by the G.I.D. and placing me on antipsychotics which aren’t needed. See these pukes have an obligation to us whether they like it or not to: 1) Treat us equal (legally) 2) Provide medical treatment within the scope of their powers 3) Not to just discontinue our current medical treatment we were receiving without a damn good reason to do so. See as long as there are no impediments there shouldn’t ever be a reason to discontinue, Sh**, Right? They never contacted my previous care provider for advice, not 1 time did they do this and I had Dr. Lori Kohler who is the telemed doctor in California for all us girls where I was. She is an expert paid to examine, diagnose, and testify in court on behalf of “us trans girls.” While using the legal library computer I found multiple times her name and a Dr. Denise Taylor who was employed at another prison and treated us girls there too. Look their names up and see what they have done for other girls and how they can help all of us. I think Dr. Taylor is now in private practice and Dr. Kohler now is still working for CA prison, at least as of 2011 she was when I left for the Feds. This info may help. I will also be requesting:

1. Estradiol injection (Premarin/substitute)
2. Premarin pills 25 mg daily
3. Spironolactone50100 mg daily
4. Routine blood work and monitoring/tracking of hormone therapy replacement
5. Creme(s) for hair face removal
6. Laser therapy/electrolysis therapy
7. Weekly psychological therapy (or as needed) for me by a (qualified) Dr. trained in this field or one I feel comfortable with.
8. 81 mg aspirin therapy daily
9. No medications may be stopped without a court order so Medical can’t play games

I am also requesting on the BP9 (government form) that no reprisal can be taken against me by staff for me exercising my 1st amendment right to free speech. I am also including my active prescriptions also I was on in California attaching them to the form for warden(s) review and preparing all documents to be filed with the court. Remember this case it may help you other girls: a deliberate indifference of a serious medical condition or need like G.I.D. Can’t just be something medical overlooks. So put this on your grievance too. The case is Merriweather v. Faulkner 821 F. 2d 403 412413 (7th Cir 1987) What I’m doing for us here I don’t know if it will help in your fight.

But remember we all have rights, our right for fair and ethical treatment under Law is fundamental for these pukes to recognize. Hell if we don’t recognize it for ourselves who will? Remember document everything. Record every talk you have with your care provider. Make him be liable and responsible for most. File a grievance, make a claim for a suit and let’s get what we got coming. Be a part of something big...yourself. Stand up, protect against unfair treatment and discrimination... aren’t you important enough to stand up for your star player, you? I’ll keep all of you up to date, and remember my love to all Cali girls and everyone else... My love always, Melissa, Cali’s Diamond Girl.

Melissa, Oregon

Dear Black & Pink Family,

I would start this, my first letter since becoming a member of our awesome family, by telling you all about myself, but as ashamed as I am to admit it, I’m afraid to do that. Ashamed because of the way that might make my brothers and sisters think that I’m not proud to be who I really am. I am proud of who I am, and I’m proud to be a member of our family. The thing I’m not proud about is my fear of anyone in this prison finding out who I really am. I worry that there could be someone here who has subscribed to our newspaper with bad intentions. Intentions such as trying to recognize someone by what we write in our letters to our family.

That person’s motivation for wanting to do that would be to cause problems for our brother or sister who wrote the letter, and could be an inmate or even staff. I don’t want anyone here to know that I’m a proud member of this family of yours because even now in 2014 there are still too many haters. Being in custody is bad enough. I don’t need any more problems with those haters.

I DO admire all of you who’s letters tell me you’re not worried about any of that. You’re all so brave and I look forward to the day when I can be so brave. It seems like the more we share in the Newspaper, the more likely someone with bad intentions can identify us. I wish I could write directly to those of you who’ve written so much about yourselves, but we all know that DOC policy doesn’t allow us to communicate that way. I’d love to have the chance to get to know you well enough through letters, so I could better see and know where your strength to be so open about yourself comes from. Maybe that would help me find the strength within myself to open up the same way?

I think I’m older than many of you, even though I don’t feel like I am. I would like to give and receive wisdom with you all, if only we in the system could be pen pals. But maybe I can write with some of our “free world” family through the pen pal program. I received my first issues of the Newspaper in May. Now I’ll look forward to reading more of your letters. Then when my day finally comes to be back out in the free world, I’ll be very happy to be able

to finally write to my brothers and sisters who I can’t write to now. I’ll also continue to write to the people from the free world who would choose to be my pen pal now while I’m in the system. But for now, I’ll be happy to write more letters to my whole family who reads the Black & Pink Newspaper. Much love to all.
-J

Dear Black and Pink family,
My name is James, but others know me as Hurricane. I have been in the Virginia Prison System for 13.5 years now, got 7 more to go with good time. It’s really sad how gays are treated here. The officers and the administration do everything they can to keep partners away from each other. They just don’t understand or care what we go through mentally and emotionally. They will put gays in cells with homophobes and people who want to rape you, and expect you to get along with them, that don’t work, you’ll end up fighting and going to the hole. It don’t matter how much paperwork you push to get moved they will set it to the side and tell you they have took care of it and they don’t, but when you go over their head they want to lock you up. They split my husband and me up for no reason at all and “Yes” I’m trying to get him back in the cell with me. I am not going to stop pushing the paperwork ‘til I get him back. I know that some people feel the pain of what I’m going through right now. Keep you’all’s head up and stay strong- Know your rights, go to the Law Library, guys and gals keep writing and fighting the prison system.
Love,
James a.k.a Hurricane, Virginia

My name is Grace. I came across Black & Pink via my political associations with other publications and friends on the outside. I’m doing a prison term for credit card fraud and identity theft with a sentence of 2.5 to 4.5 years. I am a black transgender woman in a male medium security facility. I have been in my current facility for a couple of months after being shifted around the state due to my legal problems with several facility administrations during my prison term. Being at my current facility I must say it has been problematic with the staff and the administration, but my legal actions- addressing the Wardens and Superintendents in a legal way- has alleviated a lot of the problems that I was having in previous facilities.
Being transgender in male general population can and has caused me great agony and stress by everyone. Sadly even my gay/bi bros and sistas... only due to my being feminine and my having breasts. It bothers me because I thought that my “Family” would be at least civil with me, but due to the divisions that we LGBTQ people set forth toward each other even in these prisons, I have to be ostracized due to my appearance and gender status. When it has come to the so-called straight inmates... they are curious, quick to come at me on some “DL” stuff or they ignore but respect me. Being that New York State has a gang element that dominates the prisons, I’m usually left alone. So I am safe...
Since being in this facility as well as the previous facility I have been working on my memoir (bio) and other literary projects. Before I was led towards a criminal lifestyle, I was a Professional Theatre/Dance performer and Stage Hand in New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Texas. I struggled with alcohol and drug use (Valium), as well as homelessness, as well as abandonment from Family. However, my biggest struggle has been

my struggle with mental illness. When I lost my strength to perform and live an honest life... I could not deal with the loss of so much promise and positive outlooks on life.
Writing has been a savior and gift that has saved me from “Going under,” and Therapy and attending Faith-based Groups and Church has given me a “Road Map” to recover my Life back. I’m scared... but I’m dedicated to returning back to “The Living.”
Reading Black & Pink and acknowledging US and the struggles that we all have, has and continues to give me Hope, Promise and the Ability to move forward in a positive way. I’m scheduled for a parole hearing, but because I have lost “Good Time”... there is a great possibility that I will not make the Parole Board to be released ‘til 2015. So I will continue to write and participate in programs, Groups and Therapy to address my Future, when it comes. Take care “Family,” and acknowledge that “It Really Can Get Better” personally when One faces their struggles, demons and estrangements. I can, and have, and continue to. Keep your head up.
Peace y’all,
Grace, New York

VICTIM OF ANTI-GAY HATE CRIME LUKE O’DONOVAN
SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR SELF-DEFENSE

Originally published on <http://letlukego.wordpress.com>

On New Year’s Eve of 2013, Luke O’Donovan attended a house party in Reynoldstown, a neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia. Luke was seen dancing with and kissing other men at the party. Later in the night he was insulted with homophobic slurs, and attacked by several people at once. Luke unsuccessfully attempted to escape, at which point several witnesses reported watching between 5 and 12 men ganging-up on Luke and stomping on his head and body, evidently with the intent to kill him. Luke was called a faggot before and during the attack. Throughout the course of the attack, Luke and five others were stabbed. Luke was subsequently imprisoned and charged with five counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon as well as one count of attempted murder. He spent two and a half weeks in jail without bond before being released under bond conditions that drastically affected his life. None of the other individuals involved in the altercation were charged.

Luke is a young queer man previously residing in metro Atlanta. At the time of his arrest, Luke was a student at Georgia Gwinnett College and planned on transferring to Georgia State University — a plan he subsequently had to abandon because of legal fees, medical costs, and bond conditions. The conditions of Luke’s bond caused him to move out of the house he was staying in, as well as preventing him from interacting with a large section of his community in Northeast Atlanta.

Luke’s trial concluded on August 12, 2014, when he accepted a plea deal. The negotiated deal was as follows: Luke will be in the Georgia prison system for 2 years beginning on August 12, after which he will begin eight years of harsh probation. At the time of sentencing, the judge added to the negotiated plea that Luke will be banished from the state of Georgia for the eight years of his probation.

ON THE INSIDE ARTWORK FORM

Black & Pink is facilitating the revival of the art program in a new way, called On the Inside! If you are an artist, here’s how it will work. Create any artwork that you would like (drawings, cards, paintings). We are seeking art drawn in ball point pen or pencil on letter-sized copy paper. The exhibit is taking shape along the following themes: portraits, self-portraits, spirituality, erotic, love, advocacy, gender, pop culture, celebrities, sports cars, crime & punishment, and prison life. Some of the artwork will be accepted for an upcoming exhibit; the artist will be promptly compensated \$50 for all accepted artwork (except \$10 for cards) and postage expenses incurred. Any artwork that isn’t accepted for the exhibit for any reason will be promptly returned to the artist, or other address. If your artwork is accepted for the Exhibition, you assign all right, title and interest in the work to us (in other words you transfer ownership of the art and its copyrights to the Exhibit coordinators) as consideration for participation in the show. The artwork will never be resold, and will likely be donated to an LGBTQ Archive in years to come. **Please do not write your name and number anywhere on the front of the artwork to protect your privacy. We are all excited to see what you create! Please fill out a questions 1 through 6 once, and questions 7 through 10 on separate slip like this for each piece of artwork you submit. Please mail the artwork with the information below on slips to:**
On the Inside, PO Box 173, 2658 Griffith Park Blvd. , Los Angeles, CA 90039

- 1)Your preferred name for the exhibit. We will only include the first initial of your last name in the exhibit.
- 2)Your gender pronouns (eg. she / he / xe / they).
- 3)How do you identify? (Optional: gender, sexuality, race, age).
- 4)Your legal name, number, and mailing address.
- 5)If my artwork is not accepted for the exhibit:
__ Send it to my address (please list)
__ Send it to another address (please list)
__ Black & Pink can keep and display it
- 6)Preferred method of compensation:
__ Donation into commissary account (Please include deposit slips or instructions):
__ Magazines/books (Details)
__ Other:
- 7)Title of artwork (for display at exhibit).
- 8)Description of artwork (for display at exhibit).
- 9)Anything else you’d like the exhibit curator to know about the artwork or about yourself which can be shared / feel free to write on another page, and please note that the exhibit curator is not able to be a penpal):

YOU WILL NEVER KNOW

what a letter will mean
if you haven’t been where I’ve been
or seen what I’ve seen

I am confined in a world
Behind four walls,

I can’t see anyone I love
and I can’t receive no calls,

I used to wake up out of my sleep
confused and alarmed,

hoping that my friends and family
haven’t been hurt or harmed

But then I come back to my senses
and when I look out my window
I see rolls of barbs and fences.

No note, nor letter
and not even a card and when no one writes
time sure gets hard on the yard

“You will never know,”
what a letter will mean
until you’ve been where I’ve been,
or seen what I’ve seen...
“Write Soon.”

Michael, North Carolina

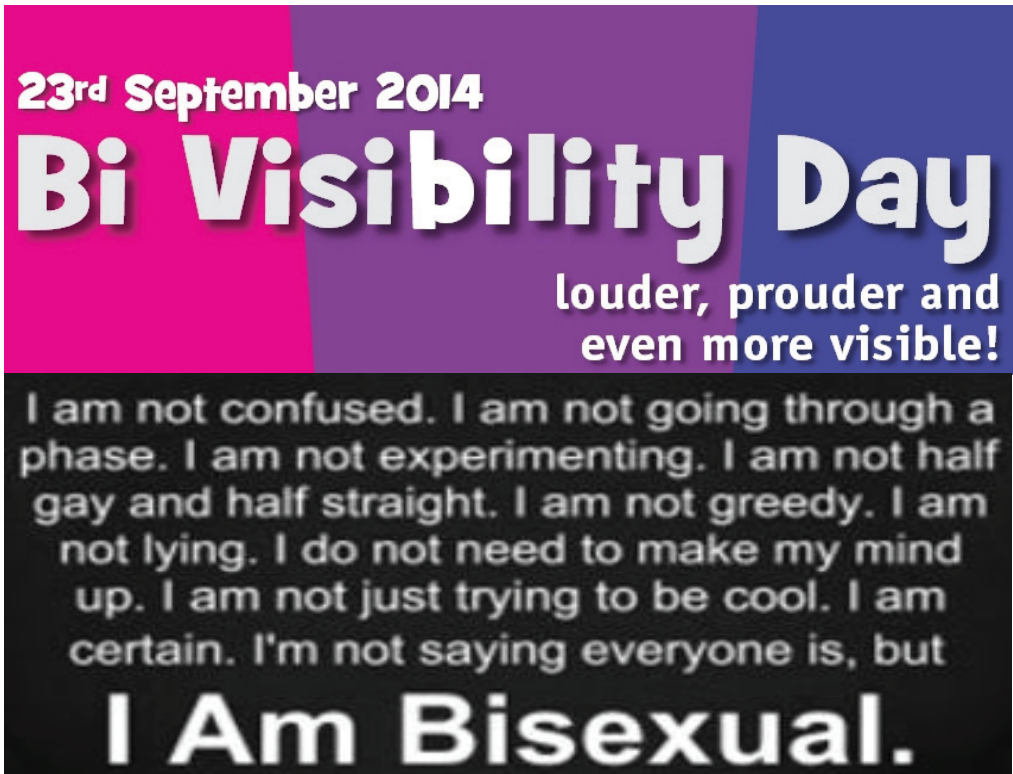
Walls collapse like dominoes on sheets of glass. SHATTERED!!! SHATTERED!!! Are my world views, BATTERED!! BATTERED!! As I’m led askew while locked away. Anxiety, despair, All that’s felt in these long halls I suffer in silence as I Listen, Listen to the calls... calls for attention, the desperate grasps at retention of some form of sanity. For it’s too, too easy, To lose our humanity, while suffocating in ignorance, All this contagious belligerence. (LGBT, Black, White, Brown). It makes No difference to Me, we’re all just “people.” Locked up behind these bars, by some black dress wearing authoritarian pretender. It’s not meant to rehabilitate, Quite the f***ing opposite, only debilitate. (MSUMAXPCADSEG.) They’re all forms of torture utilized by the wicked monster (PIC)... From the outside lookin, you say, thank God it is not me, But for You and Me who live it everyday, Dear Dear God, Why Me??? But!!! They’ll NEVER pacify our resistance or our circle A’s. This is our f***ing reason for existence. (I WILL SCREAM MY LUNGS OUT!) Til every door is open, Everyone “Lost” is found, til every inhuman condition, Is fixedFixed by ABOLITION! People of the world should be able to love and live as they please. Remember one thing if any other! “NO matter Black, White, Brown, LGBT” We are all 100% EQUAL—You & Me...

R.N.Q., Illinois

MY LOVER, MY FRIEND!

When I met you, I wasn’t planning on falling in love. I wasn’t planning on feeling so attracted to someone, but you awakened feelings inside me that I’d forgotten existed. When I met you I didn’t realize how much our love would grow. But I also didn’t suspect that the attraction that first brought us together would reach beyond passion to the comfort and knowing I have someone very special, someone who is not only my lover but my close friend. When I met you, I had no idea where our relationship would lead us, how beautiful you would make my world. But now I know without a doubt... the luckiest day of my life was the day that I met you. I never had to ask myself whether I was in love with you... That love was there inside of me like it had been waiting for you to come along and set it free. I love you without doubts, questions, or expectations and it is so different from what I’ve ever felt before. I don’t want to change a thing about you because I appreciate you so much just for being who you are. Being in love with you feels as natural to me as breathing... and just like air I breathe, you’re in the midst of me. My love for you will last forever and the space you have in my heart no one could take. Remember that to me you are more than my lover, you are also my friend.

J.R., Texas



BLACK AND PINK BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Dear Brothers and Sisters
My Black and Pink Brothers and sisters
-My Ace boones- We in Tune
-We Civilize-
-In this message-
-We wear Hoodies and Tim Beriands-
-And Society fear our presence-
-Dear brothers and sisters-
-The Kings and Queens of the Essence-
-I had to readjust myself when I walk at night-
-Striving not to be targeted-
-Uprising, upliftment in my mind-
-But my trueself is always disregarded-
-I talk to you because you are my brothers and sisters-
-My a-like, my Balike, and I’m hoping deep down-
-That we C-alike-
-Because what’s right is justice- (Just-Ice)
-My Black and Pink Brothers and Sisters-
-Teammates, comrade in this cold war-
-Knowledge is a skeleton key that breaks open closed doors-
-And I want more- Don’t shoot me walking home-
-Don’t give me drugs to weather the storm-
Black and Pink Brothers and Sisters let’s not live microscopic-
- Hidden wisdom is lost in books- So I enrolled in college
-And this is the Truth- There is happiness with and without roots

Hakim, Virginia

DARKNESS

Darkness and loneliness
Fills my cell with pain
And fear too great to yell I wait for a mailman to deliver to me
As I wipe away tears no one else will see.
I pray so sincerely until
 head raised alone, Please God.
Soon send a letter of love
I long to gaze upon pages so dear
With riches that bring my loved ones near.
Words of diamonds on pages of gold
A message from Heaven as their story
 is told
 We love you, we miss you...
 We pray you’ll be free.
A treasure filled envelope just for me.
Please bring me memories of Joy
 I once knew families, friends...
 and things I will do.
The darkness and pain of my cell will prevail.
As my name again, was not called for mail.

Aaron, Oklahoma

UNLABELED

Unlabeled, that’s me, or then again, maybe it’s not, at least for now
I look at myself as someone who doesn’t conform to society’s norm
of what others call me even when they haven’t a clue as to who I
Truly am and want to put their label on what they think I am
Or should be because everyone has to be someone so they can be
Identifiable to the rest of us and relish those tags we’re given by
folks who, of course, know us better than we know ourselves, right?

Not today and never will I allow you to place me in a niche that
fits your idea of who and what I am or should be when I myself
know that this is not the essence of me and once I can place my
Person in a file that allows others to call me something other than
this label I was tagged with by those supposed superior types who
actually haven’t the foggiest idea of who anybody is because they cannot
Accept why their opinions really aren’t significant in the scheme of life.

I stand alone and unlabeled because I cannot even label myself
else I conform to that which is ludicrous in this world
where all is labeled for the sake of making it easier for us to identify
another and look askance upon them as their labels show them to be a
defect named by society that is itself defective because it has
the temerity to label one when the one labeled is still searching
for their own identity and prefers to label themselves unlabeled.

Douglas, Texas

POLICE MURDER MICHAEL BROWN, AN 18 YEAR OLD BLACK MAN IN FERGUSON, MISSOURI

On August 10th, 2014, police in Ferguson, Missouri, shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager after instructing Brown and a friend to move from the street to the sidewalk. This shooting comes on the heels of another murder of an black unarmed man in Wal-Mart, 22 year old, John Crawford III, who was holding a toy gun and shot by police officers. Since the shooting, numerous protests have occured in Ferguson and across the United States. In Ferguson, protesters were met with a ridiculous show of police force including tear gas, rubber bullets, and the establishment of a city curfew. Many are criticizing the response of the state, and conversations about the militarization of the police, connections between Ferguson and Gaza, and the lack of accountability police face after murdering black men and women. While there are also numerous articles trying to demonize Mike Brown, attempts to justify the police response, or focus on “looting” protesters, just as many people are rejecting these narratives. Meanwhile the FBI has launched an investigation and a grand jury has been convened. The events in Ferguson have sparked a conversation on social media sites called #BlackLifeMatters, a national call to action to support Ferguson, demand police accountability, and organize locally for the value of black life. Read Black & Pink’s statement of solidarity on Page 2.

REMEMBERING THE ATTICA UPRISING

Originally published on <http://zinnedproject.org/materials/attica-prison-uprising>

From Sept. 9 to 13, 1971, prisoners took control of the Attica Correctional Facility in the most well-known prison uprising of the 20th century. They made a series of demands to prison administrators and held about 40 people as hostages. Their demands were included in a Manifesto that began:

We, the men of Attica Prison, have been committed to the New York State Department of Corrections by the people of society for the purpose of correcting what has been deemed as social errors in behaviour.

The program which we are submitted to under the façade of rehabilitation are relative to the ancient stupidity of pouring water on a drowning man, inasmuch as we are treated for our hostilities by our program administrators with their hostility as medication.

In our peaceful efforts to assemble in dissent as provided under this nation’s U.S. Constitution, we are in turn murdered, brutalized, and framed on various criminal charges because we seek the rights and privileges of all American People.

In our efforts to intellectually expand in keeping with the outside world, through all categories of news media, we are systematically restricted and punitively remanded to isolation status when we insist on our human rights to the wisdom of awareness [...] After four days of fruitless negotiations, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller ordered that the prison be retaken; 39 people were killed in a 15-minute assault by state police.

The New York State Special Commission on Attica (also known as the McKay Commission) appointed to investigate the uprising suggested: “With the exception of Indian massacres in the late 19th century, the State Police assault which ended the four-day prison uprising was the bloodiest one-day encounter

between Americans since the Civil War.”

The uprising did not come out of nowhere. In September 1971 at Attica prison, there were over 2,200 people locked up in dehumanizing conditions in a facility built to accommodate 1,600.bIn 1970, there were 48,497 people in federal and state prisons in the U.S. By 2009, there were 1,613,740 individuals locked up in our federal and state prisons.

This exponential growth of the prison population means that the events of Attica are as relevant today as they were in 1971; perhaps even more so. There is a continued need to investigate the conditions of our prisons today and to advocate for an end to mass incarceration. [Adapted from the introduction to Attica Prison Uprising 101: A Short Primer.]

FAMILY FEEDBACK SUMMARY: GENERAL STRATEGY

Thanks for your insightful suggestions! Here are sample responses (out of 14 responses so far) answering the question:

Let us know your thoughts and suggestions on any or all of the draft of B&P’s General Strategy on page 2 of May issue. [The General Strategy on page 2 of May issue was Solidarity/Movement Building; Abolitionist Reforms; Direct Service; Direct Action; Accountability; Education; Fundraising; Alternatives; Organization Building]

“It sounds like you’re becoming more organized, more focused, more detail-oriented. You’re right about the family having different politics and priorities. It’s good to take those into account while moving forward. I may not agree with everything in B&P, however I agree with the general purpose and goals.”

“It would be great for B&P to work with the excellent organizations listed in Out For Change. I was particularly interested in INCITE, QUIP, Streetwise and Safe, Sage Community Health Collective, and BreakOUT! I’m sure I’m not the only one who would appreciate it if you published more info on any of the orgs you guys decide to connect with, especially ones that put out publications we could subscribe to.”

“It sounds good in theory, [but] why don’t you ever talk about transformative justice for those of us already stuck in prison? I have not many chances in Florida DOC at 40 years to feel and experience just what transformative justice is, what is it? How do I gain access to it?”

“What you said in the accountability section is very important to stick to: Remember that occasionally publishing a letter that varies slightly from the mission is okay and doesn’t weaken B&P’s message. The education is another good section. Public awareness is important- publish a book about what goes on. Sales from the book would also help with fundraising. I’d really love to help B&P grow in any way I can.”

“[On Accountability] I believe any issues that need immediate resolution should be handled solely by the FWLC, & any issues that do not require an immediate resolution, I would like to see addressed in an article in the B&P newspaper; this would afford everyone in the B&P family an opportunity to have [their] voice heard.”

ADDRESSES: PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESSES FOR MAIL!

Please Note: You can send multiple requests/topics in one envelope! Due to concerns about consent and confidentiality, you cannot sign up other people for the newspaper. However, we can accept requests from multiple people in the same envelope. There’s no need to send separate requests in more than one envelope. If you are being released and would still like to receive a copy of the newspaper, please let us know the address we can send the newspaper to!

<i>Dear Black and Pink,</i> If you would like to request:	Black & Pink - _____ 614 Columbia Rd Dorchester, MA 02125 Please write one or more of these topics in the top line of the address:
Newspaper Subscriptions, Pen-Pal Program, Address Change, Request Erotica, Religious Support & Volunteering (Send thank you cards to donors, etc.)	Black & Pink - General
Newspaper Submissions- Stories, Articles, Poems &Art	Black & Pink - Newspaper Submissions
Black & Pink Organization Feedback	Black & Pink - Feedback
Advocacy Requests- Include details about situation and thoughts about how calls or letters might help	Black & Pink - Advocacy
Submit to Erotica Zine	Black & Pink - HOT PINK
Stop Your Newspaper Subscription	Black & Pink – STOP Subscription
Send in your survey in an envelope	Black & Pink - SURVEY

Pen Pal Program: LGBTQ prisoners can list their information and short non-sexual ad on the internet where free world people can see it and decide to write. There will be a Pen-Pal Request Form in the Newspaper every 4 months.